

### IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for defining an electronic address, comprising:
  - selecting a preferred domain name;
  - selecting one or more additional domain names in addition to the preferred domain name;
  - selecting a preferred address format;
  - selecting one or more additional address formats in addition to the preferred address format; and
  - retaining the preferred domain name, the one or more additional domain names, the preferred address format, and the one or more additional address formats to define the electronic address, wherein the preferred domain name and the one or more additional domain names include an Internet domain name selected from one or more of the following domain names: “.com,” “.edu,” “.org,” “.gov,” “.bus,” “.pro,” and a country domain, wherein the preferred address format and the one or more additional address formats are separated from the preferred domain name and the one or more additional domain names by a delimiter and the preferred address format and the one or more additional address formats uniquely identifies a handle to a resource within an environment defined by the Internet domain name, and wherein the electronic address is used to route and to deliver messages over the Internet to the resource defined by the electronic address, and wherein the electronic address is defined as variable electronic characters that define permissible types of electronic characters that are permissible within the email address, and wherein the email address is resolved within an email system using a directory service to acquire attributes for the resource that populate values for the variable electronic characters to define the email address for the resource.
2. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising acquiring a text string associated with a preferred electronic address and retaining the text string to further define the electronic address.

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3. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein in acquiring the text string, the text string is dynamically acquired from a directory object, when present in the directory object.
4. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein in acquiring the text string, the preferred electronic address is calculated from a directory.
5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein in selecting the preferred address format and the one or more additional address formats, the formats include one or more subcomponents.
6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein in selecting the preferred address format and the one or more additional address formats, the one or more subcomponents are order independent within the preferred address format and the one or more additional address formats.
7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein in selecting the preferred address format and the one or more additional address formats, the preferred address format and the one or more additional address formats include one or more subcomponents, and wherein the one or more subcomponents include at least one of an electronic login name, an administrator defined identification, a first name, a last name, a middle initial, a middle name, and a nickname.
8. -25. (Cancelled).
26. (Currently Amended) A method, comprising:
- assigning multiple domains with an electronic mail (email) definition each domain is a valid Internet domain name defined by explicit string values that represent acceptable Internet domain names;
  - assigning multiple prefix formats with the email definition; and
  - retaining the email definition, wherein any selected one of the multiple prefix formats when combined with any selected one of the domains resolves to a same electronic address,

wherein the same electronic address identifies a resource over the Internet that is to receive messages that are routed over the Internet using combinations of the multiple prefix formats combined with any selected one of the domains to uniquely identify the resource over the Internet, and wherein the email definition is defined as variable electronic characters resolved within an email system by using a directory service to acquire attribute values for the resource that populate the variable electronic characters to obtain the same electronic address for the resource.

27. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 26 further comprising, using one or more policies to assign the multiple domains and the multiple prefix formats.
28. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 26 further comprising, preferring a particular domain over remaining ones of the multiple domains.
29. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 26 further comprising, preferring a particular prefix format over remaining ones of the multiple prefix formats.
30. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 26 further comprising, identifying multiple components with each of the multiple prefix formats.
31. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 27 further comprising, allowing the components to be assembled in an order independent manner.
32. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 27 further comprising, enforcing a predefined order for assembling the components.
33. (Currently Amended) A method, comprising:  
defining a plurality of domains for an electronic mail (email), each domain is represented as a string value for a valid Internet domain;

defining a plurality of prefix formats for the email, each prefix format separated by a delimiter and capable of being associated with one or more of the plurality of domains to form an address for the email that identifies a resource over the Internet, the address used to route the email over the Internet and locate the resource; and

retaining rules that define the address of email as permissibly having any one of the plurality of domains and any one of the plurality of prefix formats, and wherein the address is defined via the plurality of prefix formats and the plurality of domains as variable electronic characters that are resolved within an email system by accessing a directory service to acquire attributes that populate the variable electronic characters to provide the address.

34. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 33 further comprising, identifying a preferred or desired domain from the plurality of domains.

35. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 33 further comprising, identifying a preferred or desired prefix format from the plurality of prefix formats.

36. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 33 further comprising, evaluating the rules in response to receiving a particular one of the plurality of domains and in response to receiving a particular one of the prefix formats and in response to the evaluation identifying an electronic address associated with the email.

37. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 33, wherein defining the plurality of prefix formats further includes defining components that when combined with one another in various permutations define each of the plurality of prefix formats.

38. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 33 further comprising, establishing the rules as variable string statements that define each of the plurality of domains and that define each of the plurality of prefix formats.